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THE UGANDA PROTECTORATE

AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, BOTANY, ZOOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, LANGUAGES AND HISTORY OF THE TERRITORIES UNDER BRITISH PROTECTION IN EAST CENTRAL AFRICA, BETWEEN THE CONGO FREE STATE AND THE RIFT VALLEY AND BETWEEN THE FIRST DEGREE OF SOUTH LATITUDE AND THE FIFTH DEGREE OF NORTH LATITUDE

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AND

9 MAPS BY J. G. BARTHOLOMEW AND THE AUTHOR

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[Title Page]

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[171] The manners and customs of the *Ja-luo*, a fragment of the Nilotic peoples which is now isolated, are very similar to those of the Aluru (to the north-west of the Albert Nyanza) and the Japalua (incorrectly called "Shefalu"), who live in the northern part of Unyoro. It would seem, indeed, as though at some time or other the Ja-luo of Southern Kavirondo had not come down direct from the north-west, from the Lango country where their nearest relations reside at the present day, but that a large tribe of Nilotic people closely allied to the Acholi and Lango had formerly

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101 174 inhabited Northern Unyoro (where a fragment of them remains), and that the Bahima and their Bantu subjects drove this branch of the Nilotic people across the Albert Nile to the north-west (where they remain as the Aluru) and into Busoga (across the Victoria Nile) on the south-east. From Busoga they appear to have been driven on by the Bantu right through the Kavirondo country until they finally settled and throve round the shores of Kavirondo Bay, where they at present bear the name of Ja-luo or Nyifwa. It is a remarkable fact that the Ja-luo to this day are

[501]

427. A RAFT MADE OF PAPYRUS BUNDLES, WHITE NILE

called by their Bantu neighbours "Abanyoro," which would indicate that this theory of their origin is correct.

361 The Ja-luo reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts, which are surrounded by hedges of aloe and euphorbia. Formerly they built mud [178] or stone walls round their settlements in imitation of the Bantu Kavirondo to the north. But this is a custom which has now died out. The houses [342] are similar in appearance to those of the Bantu tribes around them, as is the arrangement about the two fireplaces. Young unmarried girls usually 513 sleep together in one large hut under the care of an old woman. The 882 young men and boys of the village also sleep by themselves, generally

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near the entrance to the village, so that they can watch over any attempt to steal cattle. The hut which is directly opposite the gate of the village is usually that of the principal wife of the village head-man. There is much the same superstition as among the Bantu Kavirondo about shutting the door of a house behind a person who has just left it.[1]

Unmarried men go naked. Married men who have children wear a

498. HUSBAND AND WIFE, JA-LUO

small piece of goat skin, which, though quite inadequate for purposes of decency, is, nevertheless, a very important thing in etiquette; for a married man with a child must on no account call on his mother-in-law without wearing this piece of goat skin. To call on her in a state of absolute nudity would be regarded as a serious insult, only to be atoned for by the payment of goats. Even if under the new dispensation a man

[1] [i.e.) A very bad omen; more the Bantu equivalent to divorce if it occurs between husband and wife. (cw p. 752-not processed). -Analyst]

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291 wears European trousers, he must have a piece of goat skin underneath. 5% Unmarried girls wear no clothes. Married women wear a tail of strings

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429. JA-LUO WOMEN: TAILS AND APRONS

behind. When they go to visit another village, they don a goat skin slung from the shoulder, upon which a curious and rather pretty pattern has been burnt with a red-hot stick. When a woman is married, she puts on

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this tail behind and receives a present from her husband. Afterwards it is considered very bad manners for a married woman to serve food to her husband without putting on this tail. On the other hand, if the husband or any other man should touch the married woman's tail, it is considered that he wishes to bewitch her, and such an offence must be atoned for by the usual sacrifice of a goat.

430. PATTERN FREQUENTLY SHAVED ON MEN'S HEADS (JA-LUO)

The Ja-luo *pull out the incisors* in the lower jaw. It may also occur amongst these people, as amongst the Lango tribes to the north, that not only the four incisors, but even the canines, are taken out, at any rate from the mouths of boys. They *do not circumcise*, nor do they *scar or tattoo* their bodies, with the exception that women raise three parallel lines of dots in a semi-circle on either side of the body, the ends of the semi-circle meeting in front just below the navel, and again on the backbone. If a man has killed an enemy in war, he propitiates his enemy's spirit by shaving his head for three days after his return. Heads of men are also shaved in the pattern given in the accompanying illustration (Fig. 430).

The Ja-luo, together with tribes remotely allied in origin, such as the Sūk and Lango, *ornament the outer rim of the ear* in a remarkable manner. About fifteen small holes are pierced along the edge of the cartilage, and a flattened ring of brass (looking in shape rather like a melon seed) is inserted. Hanging on the outer side of the brass ring is a large blue glass bead. In the lowest hole towards the lobe a plain brass ring is inserted. Regarding these blue beads Mr. Hobley writes: "For a long time I thought these blue beads were ordinary trade beads of the variety known as 'kiketi'; but upon inquiry I found this idea was indignantly repudiated. It was explained to me that the beads were picked up in the fields in the neighbourhood of the Maragolia Hills* after a heavy thunderstorm, and it was believed that they descended with the rain." Some of the chiefs also wear bits of jasper and chalcedony with a fine circular hole. These beads were formerly of great value, and were purchased at the rate of one cow per bead. They are said to have been picked up in the same way. Their name for these beads is

* In North Kavirondo.

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301 "nyaluo." It is thought by some authorities that these have wandered down in past ages from the direction of Egypt—in fact, some of the

[142 291]

431. A JA-LUO MAN WITH EAR-RINGS

more northern Nilotic peoples declare that they came from the north or north-east. I imagine that the original possessors of these beads made considerable settlements in the neighbourhood of the Maragolia Hills,

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and that the beads were constantly being dropped and lost in the fields. After floods the loosened soil might expose to sight some of the beads which had thus been dropped or thrown away. The supply of these blue

432. A JA-LUO MAN WITH EAR-RINGS

beads is, of course, quite inadequate for the population, and many are making up for the scarcity now by using the ordinary blue beads of commerce.

The Ja-luo men often wear an armlet of threaded cylindrical wooden

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433. HEAD-DRESS OF FEATHERS AND NECK AND ARM ORNAMENTS IN IRON WIRE OF JA-LUO MEN. (NOTE THE PROMINENT UPPER INCISOR TEETH, DUE TO THE LOWER INCISORS BEING REMOVED)

[p.786]

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blocks on the upper part of the arm. The wooden blocks are coloured red with oxide of iron. A band strung with small pieces of wood of the same colour is sometimes worn round the forehead. Some of the married men wear a semi-circle of ivory on the forehead, made of the split canine teeth of the hippopotamus. (The tooth, however, I am informed, is not split, but ground down until it is only an eighth of an inch thick.) Others wear the tusks of a wart-hog. The Ja-luo men, like most of the tribes of Nilotic origin, frequently adopt a curious stork-like attitude, standing on some hillock or ant-hill on one leg with the other leg bent and the sole of the foot apposed to the inner side of the knee of the leg on which the body is poised. They usually wear sandals of leather when travelling.

The Ja-luo live much by *agriculture*. They cultivate *sorghum, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, eleusine, pumpkins, tobacco, and hemp.* Salt is made from the ashes of reeds. They eat practically *all kinds of meat* except the hyæna. Young men eat leopard in order to make them fierce in war. The crested crane is universally protected, and is never killed. The women do not eat fowls, and some women do not eat sheep or eggs. Some eat hippopotamus, and some refuse that meat. Women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a disagreeable custom of mixing cows' urine with the milk of the cow. The urine is allowed to stand a day or two in order to increase its flavour. The people say that this admixture increases the amount of butter in the milk. They like the flavour, and think that it has medicinal value. They kill oxen by sticking a knife into the jugular vein. The head must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed in the same manner. Besides the flesh of fowls, cattle, sheep, and goats, they eat large quantities of fish, which they obtain from the rivers, and, above all, from the waters of the Victoria Nyanza.

Cooking is done entirely by women in earthen pots inside the hut or on the verandah, and the food is served in little wicker baskets. Father and sons eat together in a little separate hut which has open sides. Women eat separately from the men inside their own houses.

They do not *hunt* much with dogs, but catch a good deal of game in pitfalls. They will also attack the elephant with spears. Fish is caught in the Victoria Nyanza by means of large, conical wicker traps called "dema." The process is as follows: They bring two very long ropes, one end of each of which is firmly secured to the shore. One rope lies, weighted, along the bottom under the water, the other floats on the surface, but from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks. The two ropes above and below correspond with its other, and are connected at intervals with strings to ensure their correspondence, while the fringe of papyrus

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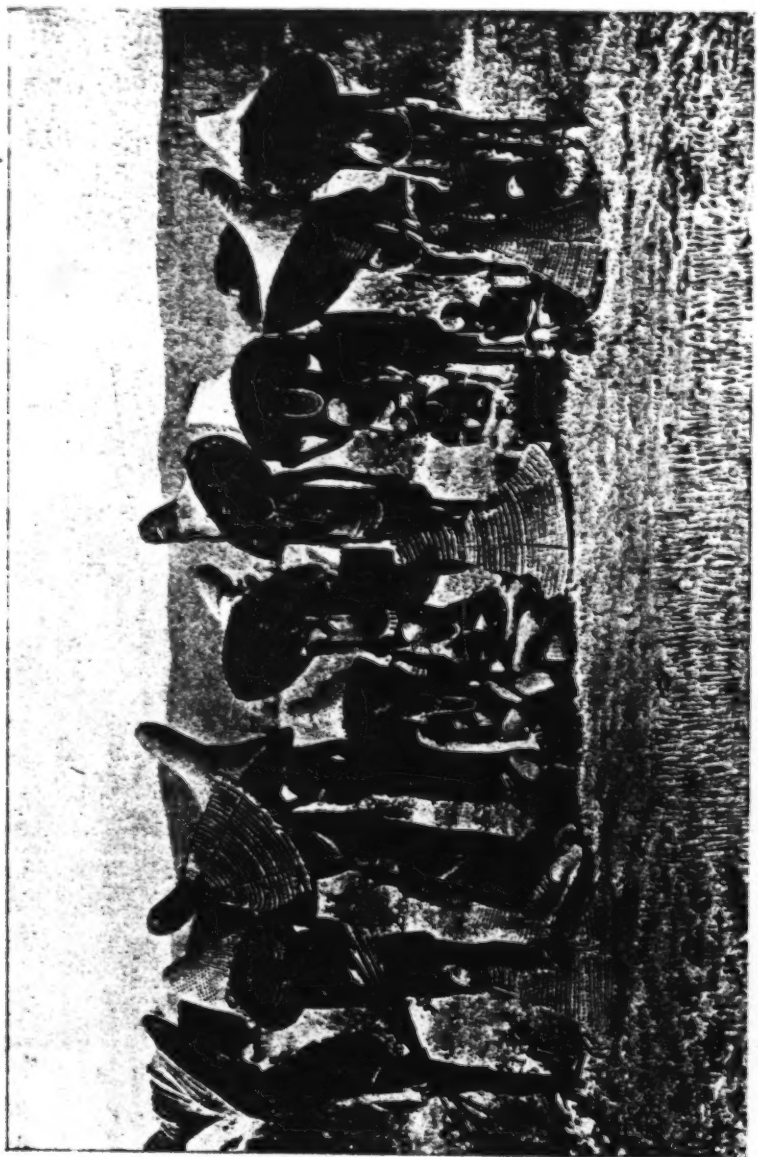

434. A LUO FISHERMAN AND THEIR BASKETS

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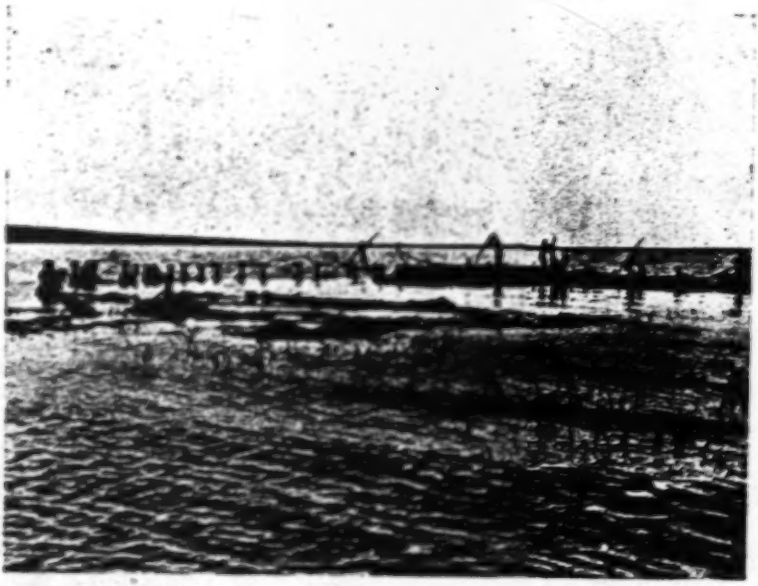
stripe makes this arrangement into a kind of pliable fence. This, by means of canoes, is brought round through the water back to the shore till it describes rather more than a semi-circle. The bringing round of the rope serves to chase all the fish that are between it and the shore towards the mouths of the big wickerwork traps which are placed in a row in the shallow water. The women, at the same time, walk up and down dragging traps of smaller mesh, in which they collect numbers of small fish. A good deal of fish-spearing takes place at night by torch-



435. JA-LUO OUT FISHING IN KAVIRONDO BAY WITH SHEAVES OF PAPYRUS STALKS

light. The Ja-luo fishermen state that they get the best hauls of fish after a downpour of rain. *Rafts* of ambatch wood similar to those in use on the Nile are employed in laying out the nets. The Nyakach people of the south shore of Kavirondo Bay fish to a great extent with hook and line. The Ja-luo canoes are small dug-outs of poor appearance. Large quantities of fish are split and dried in the sun and sent inland to exchange for game.

Both sexes smoke and chew *tobacco*, but only old men smoke *hemp* through water-pipes. Boys and young men in the prime of life are not allowed to smoke hemp, as it is thought injurious to their manhood.

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234 Both sexes drink the *beer* which is made from grain, but the women never drink with the men. The women make the *butter*.

326 The men do not *smelt iron*, but obtain it in pig form from the Bantu
439 Kavirondo. There is even a certain prejudice against *blacksmiths* amongst
[549] the Ja-luo. They are called "Yothetth," and among some of the tribes constitute a separate caste called "Uvino." They *forge* spears, knives, bill-hooks, and axes, but their hoes are imported from their Bantu
411 neighbours. *Shields* are made of buffalo or ox hide, and also of ambatch wood. Their *spears* have small heads, and shafts of tremendous length. They use *clubs*, and also long leaf-shaped swords, which they have borrowed from the Masai or Nandi. Bows and arrows are still employed,
278 but the arrows are no longer poisoned. Poison was said to be derived
534 from the venom of snakes, and also from certain herbs. Their musical instruments are very similar to those of the Kavirondo Bantu.

583 Girls are betrothed at the age of seven, and go to their husbands
584 at the age of ten or eleven, payment being made by degrees over the
585 years elapsing between the betrothal and the *marriage*. The girl is taken by her unmarried girl companions to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat, together with a quantity of sorghum porridge, to the bridegroom's house to provide a *wedding feast*. On the following day the bridegroom's brothers, and his other wives, if he has any, take the newly wedded wife back to her father's village, where there is another great feast. The bridegroom does not attend. The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat, and she returns to her husband, who continues to make payments to his father-in-law. The total amount of the marriage payment may reach to six cows, or their equivalent. If the man *stops* paying, his wife will leave him and go back to her father's village until the payments are resumed. If within a year of the marriage the woman does not bear a child, the husband may stop his payments, but he has no claim to the return of what has been already
587 paid, so long as his wife remains with him. If a wife dies without having borne children, the amount paid for her is returned, unless the husband agrees to accept one of his *deceased wife's sisters*, for whom only a small complimentary present is paid. If a woman refuses to stop with
586 her husband, she is given to another man, and whatever this man gives for her is paid over to her first husband. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated, she may leave her husband, but must leave her child behind with the father. If the child be a boy, when he grows up and the mother gets old she generally returns to live with her son. If after
583 a marriage has been arranged an avaricious father is loth to part with his daughter, the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If, however, the girl after capture refuses to stop with her

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husband and runs away, the amount which he has already paid on her behalf is returned and the marriage is broken off. If a woman finds herself unmarried after a long period, it is customary for her to go to a chief or a rich man and state that she has come to stay and cook for him. In such case she is usually taken to wife, but a very small complimentary present is paid for her. Chiefs may have from ten to forty wives. The Ja-luo are, generally speaking, very moral. They do not intermarry in

456. SHIFTING THE FIRE-BASKETS (JA-LUO)

the same clan, but a man may marry the daughter of one who bears the same name as himself.

The Ja-luo believe in a *supreme God* whom they call "Chieng." This, however, is the same name as the sun. When a man comes out of his house in the morning, he spits towards the east, and in the evening he spits towards the west. If the sunset is extremely red, it is said to indicate the approaching death of an important person. They believe that after death the spirits of the departed go up to the sky. If a hailstorm occurs, no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war. They believe that people can be killed by *witchcraft*, and that a wizard has only to show "medicine" to a person

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754 in order to kill him. If a person is thought to be bewitched, the medicine
683 man concerned is caught and forced to remove the spell, afterwards being punished by a fine. This kind of witchcraft, however, is not thought to be very serious. There is a deeper magic called "jamkingu." Amongst the Gemi tribe this is practised by the blacksmiths. It is of the nature of a secret society, and no doubt means secret poisoning. They have a
695 form of ordeal called "kiviri." A small pot of water is placed on the fire. A little "wimbi" flour and a bit of "medicine" are put into the water. If the water boils over, the man is guilty; if not, he is innocent. Another ordeal is as follows: A gourd basin with a large hole cut in the bottom is placed on a flat stone. Water is then poured into the calabash, the bottom of which being, of course, not close-fitting to the stone, would permit ordinarily of a leakage. But the medicine man who attends puts into the bottom of the calabash crushed-up leaves of a kind of mimosa which, for a time at least, stop the leakage and enable the calabash to be filled up with water, the retention of the water by the calabash proving the man to be innocent. Another ordeal is arranged in this way: Dry flour is given to the suspected person. If innocent, he can swallow it; if he is unable to moisten the flour with his saliva and swallow it, he is shown to be guilty.

787 As regards *omens*: If a bird sings on the left-hand side as a man
777 is starting on a journey, the journey, if for war, will be unlucky; but if it be merely a peaceful visit, it will be a fortunate one. If the bird sings on the right-hand side, it is a good omen for war, but a bad one for an ordinary visit. If a cat crosses the road from right to left, it is a good omen; if from left to right, bad. If a rat is seen on the road, and it runs along the road ahead of the man, it is a good omen; but if it crosses the road from one side to the other, it is an unlucky sign. If on a journey a man strikes the little toe of either foot, it is a very bad sign; if he strikes the big toe, it is propitious. If the eldest child of a man is a boy, and the man sets out to travel, it will be an unlucky sign if the first person he meets is also a man. On the other hand, if his eldest child is a girl, and he meets a woman when he starts on a journey, that is likewise a bad sign. They profess to be able to foretell events by
787 *divining*, and the divination is exercised on the entrails of an ox or sheep. They are a good deal given to prophesying. The chief Odua when quite a lad prophesied the coming of the white man, and this at a time when no white man had entered the country. They believe in rain-makers.

846 On the occasion of a *birth* the infant, if a boy, is kept inside the house
844 for four days; if a girl, for three days. When a birth takes place, the female neighbours attend, and a goat is killed for the mother and the other women. No man is allowed in the hut until three or four days have elapsed. The father of the child does not eat or sleep again in the

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hut until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go out to cultivate for nine days after the birth. If a woman has had two children previously who have died, she follows the same ceremony as that described among the Bantu Kavirondo. When the child has been brought back by an old woman, it is redeemed by the father, who then bores the lobe of the right ear and inserts an ear-ring of brass wire. The child is thenceforth called "Owiti," if a boy; if a girl, "Awiti," meaning "the child that has been thrown away." The old woman who picks up the child is regarded as its foster-mother. Twins are considered lucky, though their arrival is attended by a good many ceremonies and by perpitiatory dances which are of an obscene nature.

GIP. A NEGROID MAN FROM UGANDA, SOUTH SIDE OF KATONDIO NAT

When a person dies, the corpse is immediately taken out of the house. If it be a woman, her brothers-in-law dig the grave in the verandah of the house. The corpse is buried on its left side with the hand under the head. In the case of a woman's death, her relatives and friends come and wail. Her husband presents each clan that attends with a goat. The mourners stay for three days. The hut in which a person has died is used for a month. The neighbours then meet together and drink beer, and the house is broken down. Upon the death of a man his brother digs his grave, and he is buried in the house of his first wife, if she is still living. If she is dead, he is buried in the verandah of his own house. Men only wail for one day. After that only the women wail, at first for three days, and then at dawn for fifteen days.

As a sign of mourning the women wear a string of beans five round the forehead. They also wear a black tail fringed with white strings for about a month. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relatives of

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765 a dead person shave their heads for three days after the death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool outside the village, and has his head shaved. If any one of importance dies, the neighbours do not
766 cultivate for three days after the death. If a big chief dies, all the surrounding people collect at the village, and in such cases even hostilities between clans are suspended, and all join in the funeral rites of the late chief, even if he happens to be at war with some of his dependent clans. In the case of the death of a chief, a new hut is built. The grave of the chief is dug by his brother. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water-pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown in the vicinity are put into the grave, but sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink "tembo" for ten days, and slaughter many oxen. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

428 When a man dies, his property goes to the brother, if the children are small. If the eldest son is grown up, he takes the property and gives his brothers a share, but a man is not allowed to take the amount paid by any one who marries one of his sisters. This marriage payment goes to
[587] the deceased father's brothers. The brothers of the deceased take his wives,
[622] but the eldest son probably takes the youngest wife of his deceased father. When a chief dies, the son whom he has chosen succeeds him. This successor is chosen really some years before the chief dies. The successor divides the private property of the chief with his brothers.

727 When a warrior has killed a man in warfare, he must (besides
782 shaving his head) catch a fowl and hang it round his neck head uppermost. He must not enter his home village until this has been done. Whilst the fowl is suspended to the man's neck by the beak its head is severed from the body, and the head is left hanging from the man's neck. The warrior then enters the village, and shortly afterwards prepares a big feast to propitiate the man he has killed, so that his ghost may not give
788 trouble. If a house is struck by lightning, and any one is killed inside, the head-man of the village must obtain a male fowl of a red colour and walk round the house holding up the fowl three times. The house is then broken up, and the wood is used for other purposes. When desiring
728 to make peace with another tribe with whom they have been at war, they kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar such as is used for crushing grain. The representatives of each side then take out pieces of the flesh and exchange them reciprocally. An old man belonging to the side which has been worsted, and which is suing for peace, must
[293] then go to the head village of the conqueror and proceed to sweep up the cattle kraal. This is accepted as a kind of submission.

145 Like the Bantu Kavirondo, the Ja-luo are in the main a healthy people.

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They suffer not infrequently from pneumonia and other affections of the lungs, and their remedy for these maladies is to pierce a hole in the chest, and even to cut out a small piece of the inflamed lung. They have an antidote for snake poison; *remedies* for diarrhœa, constipation, ulcers; salves for wounds; and even drugs which are taken to avert threatened miscarriage. Venereal disease is practically unknown amongst this people, which, although so indifferent to nudity, is yet too moral to permit sexual intercourse with strangers.

Men and women have the same names. But in many instances,

438. THE GAME OF "BAO," PLAYED ALL OVER EAST CENTRAL AFRICA. [THE PLAYERS HERE ARE TAO SOLDIERS FROM BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA]

whereas the root of the name is the same, it is preceded by the vowel "O" in the case of a man, and "A" in the case of a woman. For instance, "Opio" is a male name, and "Apio" is a female name.

The games they play are few. There is the well-nigh universal game of little compartments in which seeds or pebbles are put. Boys and young men sometimes play a kind of hockey, knocking about a wooden ball.

After the return from a warlike expedition two out of every three cattle go to the chief, who divides his share with his brothers, and also gives a special reward of cattle to any man who has particularly distinguished himself in war. To this hero a wife is often given for payment.